

E - 427,270

APR 1 6 1971

1800 Pennsylvania Avenue

Anti-Surveillance Outcry Gets to Nixon

By Martin Schram
Newsday Washington Bureau

From the official White House transcript of yesterday's morning news briefing by presidential Press Secretary Ronald Ziegler:

Mr. Ziegler: . . . this administration does not conduct surveillance of private citizens at public events.

Reporter: . . . Are you saying that there will be no FBI surveillance at this upcoming peace rally and demonstration in Washington?

Mr. Ziegler: Let's be very clear on that . . . I am not going to make a statement here that would inhibit the FBI from carrying out a responsibility . . . of observing individuals who have either been convicted of a crime or who are prone to criminal violence. This is what their area of responsibility is.

Reporter: Did you not say a few minutes ago, "This administration does not conduct surveillance of private citizens at public events?"

Mr. Ziegler: Absolutely.

Reporter: That is different from what you said.

Mr. Ziegler: Wait a minute. You know what I am saying. Of private citizens or individuals who attend an event who have not been convicted of a criminal activity, who are not prone to criminal violence. That is what I am saying.

Washington—An anti-spy attitude is setting in across the land and it seems this week that the outcry is starting to bug Nixon administration officials—all the way up to the President.

Among the developments on the government surveillance scene this week:

- White House Press Secretary Ronald Ziegler reacted rather testily when drawn into a long discussion by reporters after fresh charges by Sen. Edmund Muskie, Democratic presidential hopeful from Maine, that the FBI had spied on 40 to 60 Earth Day environment rallies across the country a year ago. Ziegler labeled Muskie's charge "political" and linked it with earlier charges by House Democratic Leader Hale Boggs that the FBI had wiretapped his phone. But Ziegler then refused to deny Muskie's assertions, although the administration had been quick to brand Boggs' charge untrue.

- President Nixon personally authorized the Central Intelligence Agency director, Richard Helms, to deliver a speech to an editors' convention here staunchly defending the need for a CIA. It was Helms' first speech since he assumed command of the agency in 1966—and in fact the first speech by any CIA director since Allen Dulles left the post 10 years ago.

With House Judiciary Committee members preparing to defend the CIA, an FBI spokesman was asked whether J. Edgar Hoover soon might be making a

beleaguered domestic intelligence agency. The FBI spokesman said he doubted this would occur. "He used to give speeches quite frequently," the FBI official said, but he hasn't given so many lately." Hoover's last speech, the spokesman acknowledged, was in 1967; it was delivered before a closed convention of former FBI agents meeting in Washington. Hoover's most recent speech before that, the spokesman said, was in 1935; the spokesman did not remember the name of the group.

Sen. Muskie's most recent charges about the FBI spying at Earth Day rallies launched both the White House and the FBI into maneuvers of protective reaction. Ziegler said he would not comment on what the FBI did or did not do on Earth Day; Ziegler told reporters to ask those questions of the FBI. An FBI spokesman, in turn, said he would have no comment; the FBI spokesman said he would stand on what the White House had said.

Ziegler, meanwhile, continued to express White House confidence in Hoover and the FBI. Ziegler said, "The President's attitude is that snooping or surveillance of private citizens is quite repugnant to this administration." But Ziegler also made it clear that the FBI would continue its surveillance procedures where it feels they are necessary against persons who have been convicted of criminal activity or those "prone to criminal violence." Ziegler did not give an explanation of just how the FBI would determine who was "prone to criminal violence" and thus eligible for special FBI attention.

The Senate's No. 1 Democrat, Majority Leader Mike Mansfield (D-Mont.) told a group of reporters yesterday that he would oppose a congressional investigation of the FBI. He said he thought the charges raised by his Democratic colleagues against the FBI were "more noise than substance."

In private, some White House officials are quite bitter about the wave of anti-spy charges. "This administration is doing less surveillance than the previous administration," one Nixon aide said. "Certainly no more than any administration since Franklin Delano Roosevelt."

The Nixon official noted that President Nixon ordered a halt to military spying on civilians at the time the charges were first leveled. "and don't forget," he added, "this Army thing was not started by us in the first place. It was ordered under Ramsey Clark (Attorney General under President Johnson)."

Another White House official observed: "As this